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Medal of Honor

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Medal of Honor

05.03.2011 | Students, Culture and Society, Campus and Community, Catholic Starting with this spring's graduation ceremonies, University of Dayton graduates will receive a special symbol of their Catholic, Marianist education to go along with their diplomas.

The University will give each graduate a medal bearing the image of the Blessed William Joseph Chaminade on one side and the University seal on the other.

The symbol is part of the University's yearlong commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the birth of the Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, founder of the Marianist order that founded the

University of Dayton.

"This year, as we celebrate the birth of the founder of the Society of Mary, Blessed William Joseph Chaminade, we begin a new tradition that grounds us in our mission and demonstrates the University of Dayton's commitment to act boldly and imaginatively in community," said the Rev. James Fitz, S.M., University rector. "It will be an enduring tradition begun this Chaminade Year."

Throughout 2011, the University has been celebrating with events such as a Mass with Cincinnati Archbishop Dennis Schnurr to celebrate Chaminade's birthday April 8 and awards presented to those in the University community who personify the University's Catholic, Marianist mission. In addition, the University is planning lectures on Chaminade and will install a sculpture of Chaminade on the University's Central Mall.

"We celebrate this special birthday anniversary because Blessed Chaminade's life and vision inspire us as a community of faith and encourage us to become a community of transformation — to learn, lead and serve," Fitz said. "Blessed Chaminade saw that in the midst of social change, which can be radical and disruptive, institutions can remain vibrant and grow. New times, he believed, called for new methods. That philosophy guides us every day as we live out the Marianist mission on campus. As a community, we read the signs of the times and act boldly and imaginatively."

Chaminade, a French Roman Catholic priest, survived the French Revolution by escaping into exile in Spain after refusing to take an oath of fidelity to the civil government imposed upon the clergy. When he returned, he brought together an eclectic group of merchants, priests, teachers, chimney sweeps, former soldiers and others from all walks of life who drew their inspiration from Mary, the mother of Jesus, and believed strongly in service to youth and the poor. This was the beginning of the Marianist family from which developed the Society of Mary.

The University of Dayton is a top-10 national Catholic research university, according to *U.S. News & World Report* and the largest private university in Ohio.

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